

BOROUGH OF LEOMINSTER
HEREFORDSHIRE

ANNUAL REPORT

on the

STATE of the PUBLIC HEALTH
for the Year
19⁴⁹~~50~~

Staff of the Public Health Department

Medical Officer of Health	...	...	M. J. PLEYDELL, M.C., M.D., D.P.H.
Clerk	...	...	MISS S. DENSHAM (Resigned on 31st May, 1949) G. PROSSER (Appointed on 1st June, 1949)
Sanitary Inspector	...	...	A. S. SMITH, M.S.I.A., C.R. San. I., Cert. Meat and other Foods, Cert. C.I.S. (Tel.: Leominster 257)

Public Health Office: 4, CHURCH STREET, LEOMINSTER.

Telephone No.: Leominster 95.

To the Mayor, Aldermen and Members of the Leominster Borough Council.

MADAM AND GENTLEMEN,

I have the honour to present my Annual Report for the year 1949, which has been compiled in accordance with the Ministry of Health Circular 2/50.

During the year, twenty Council houses have been erected, eight of these being sited in the Out-Parish. As mentioned in the last Annual Report, approximately one-third of the houses in the Borough are classified as being in need of demolition and replacement, and the present rate of housing progress has not affected the great demand for housing accommodation.

The water supply for the Borough has been satisfactory in quantity and, with a few exceptions, in quality. No alterations have occurred in the system for sewage disposal.

A further outbreak of measles occurred in the second quarter of the year, but, as in 1948, the age and seasonal incidence were favourable and no fatalities were recorded from this infection. Twelve cases of scarlet fever occurred during the year but these were not in epidemic form and were not associated with any single causative factor.

In conclusion, I would like to express my appreciation of the co-operation and assistance of the Town Clerk and Borough Surveyor; and thank the Sanitary Inspector for his help and the meticulous care and attention which he has devoted to all his duties.

M. J. PLEYDELL,
Medical Officer of Health.

SECTION A.—STATISTIC SAND SOCIAL CONDITIONS OF THE AREA

Area in acres)	8,728
Population	6,060
Number of inhabited houses (end of 1949) according to the Rate Books	1,705
Rateable Value	£35,411
Sum represented by a Penny Rate	£144 3 2

EXTRACT FROM THE VITAL STATISTICS OF THE YEAR:

	Total	Male	Female
LIVE BIRTHS (Legitimate)	127	65	62
(Illegitimate)	4	2	2
Total	131	67	64
STILL BIRTHS (Legitimate)	2	2	—
DEATHS	80	43	37
DEATHS FROM PUERPERAL CAUSES	—	—	—
DEATHS OF INFANTS UNDER ONE YEAR OF AGE (Legitimate)	6	6	—

COMPARABLE DATA FOR ENGLAND AND WALES, 1949:

Birth rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population)	21.6
Birth rate for England and Wales	16.7
Still Birth rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population)	0.33
Still Birth rate for England and Wales	0.39
Death rate (per 1,000 of the estimated resident population)	13.2
Death rate for England and Wales	11.7
Infant Mortality rate (per 1,000 live births)	45.8
Infant Mortality rate for England and Wales	32.0

SECTION B.—GENERAL PROVISION OF HEALTH SERVICES FOR THE AREA

LABORATORY FACILITIES

Laboratory facilities continue to be available at the County Public Health Laboratory, Hereford, which is under the administration of the Medical Research Council.

CLINICS

There are no clinics provided by the Local Authority.

Under the County Council and Regional Hospital Board schemes the following Clinic facilities are available to residents in the district:

Child Welfare Centre: In the annexe at the Leominster Cottage Hospital, every Friday, 2—4 p.m.

Veneral Diseases: At the County Council Hospital, Hereford, on Wednesdays and Fridays.

Orthopaedic After-Care Clinic: Organised on a voluntary basis and held at the Hospital annexe.

The schemes also provide for Maternity and Child Welfare Clinics, Paediatric, Ear, Nose and Throat, and Eye Clinics. Children are referred to these Clinics as and when required, on the recommendation of the School Medical or Infant Welfare Authority, or at the request of the Medical Practitioner.

In addition a minor ailments clinic for school children is held twice a week, on Mondays and Fridays from 10—11 a.m., at the annexe at the Cottage Hospital. The object of this clinic is to give treatment for minor medical conditions before they develop into anything more serious and require the time and attention of the child's own doctor. It is thus preventive in nature. The clinic also serves a useful purpose in that regular supervision can be maintained over children with defects—such as visual and orthopaedic defects—and is thus of assistance to the Education Authority.

WATER SUPPLIES

The water supply to the Borough is obtained from deep sources at the main borehole at Worcester Road, and the well at Midsummer Meadow ; and from a shallow source known as the Western Supply. From these sources the water is pumped up to the reservoir at Newlands, and has proved adequate, both in pressure and quantity, for the needs of the community throughout the year. The quality of the water before chlorination is good; five samples for bacteriological examination having been reported upon as satisfactory. Fifty-five samples of the water after chlorination were taken during the year. Of these, six gave a coliform growth, but immediate repeat samples were reported upon as being satisfactory.

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

No alterations in the sewerage arrangements have been undertaken in the past year.

HOUSING

During the year twelve Council houses were built in the Borough, eight of which were of Airey type construction ; while a further eight Airey type houses were built in the Out-Parish, making a total of twenty houses constructed. In the same period fifteen derelict houses were demolished. The present enormous demand for housing accommodation cannot be satisfied at this rate of construction, and the high rental for Council houses to-day means that they are available only to a proportion of the population. Past experience has shown that not infrequently extra money demanded by increased rents has been made available at the expense of house funds normally allocated to essentials such as food and clothing, and that the state of health in the family has declined as a result. This is a matter worthy of consideration in the future. Further, in estimating the true state of housing it must be remembered that in addition to the high proportion of houses classified as being in need of demolition and replacement, serious overcrowding is present in many of the houses which are structurally sound.

TUBERCULOSIS

The supervision and control of tuberculosis at present comes under the care of three separate administrative departments. Hospital care and clinical work is undertaken through the offices of the Regional Hospital Board ; care and after-care by the County Council ; and environmental and preventive work by the Local Authority. A greater degree of unification of control is necessary to combat an inspection of such vast magnitude.

CARE OF THE AGED

The forthcoming census will enable an exact computation of local age groups to be made, but a national assessment shows that there is approximately one person over sixty-five for every six persons of working age (15-65). It is estimated that this proportion will increase to one to four or even one to three in the next quarter of a century. It is advisable, therefore, to look ahead and anticipate the needs of the future. Although the aged have hospital services under the Regional Hospital Board available to them ; and the provision of health visitors, home nurses, home helps and ambulances come within the ambit of the County Council ; their housing requirements are the concern of the Local Authority. There is little doubt that this problem—the care of the aged—will claim more and more attention with each ensuing year.

I am indebted to Mr. A. S. Smith, Sanitary Inspector to the Council, for the following statement (Section C to E) furnished under the Sanitary Officers (Outside London) Regulations.

SECTION C.—SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES AND INSPECTION WATER

Chlorination of piped water supplies was continued throughout the year.

PIPED SUPPLIES (Public Water Mains)

(1) The Piped water supply of the area and of its several parts has been satisfactory (a) in quality (b) in quantity.

(2) BACTERIOLOGICAL EXAMINATIONS

(a) RAW WATER BEFORE TREATMENT — Five samples taken and all reported upon as satisfactory.

(b) WATER AFTER CHLORINATION

Number of samples in which Bact. Coli absent in 100ml.	49.0
Percentage of samples in which Bact. Coli absent in 100ml.	89.1%
Number of samples in which Bact. Coli found in 100ml. ...	6.0

ANALYSES

Number of Coliform Bacilli in 100ml.	Number of Samples	Faecal Streptococci from 10.0ml.
0	49	Faecal streptococci absent
1	1	do.
3	1	do.
5	1	do.
7	1	do.
11	1	do.
13	1	do.

(3) No plumbo-solvent action—hard water.

(4) Action in respect of any form of contamination—Immediate re-sampling. All re-samples reported upon as satisfactory.

(5) Number of dwelling houses and population supplied from Public Water Mains:—

(a) Direct to houses—1,477 houses. Approximate population 5,250.

(b) By means of stand pipes—53 houses. Approximate population 200.

SHALLOW WELLS or SPRING WATER SUPPLIES

The approximate number of houses relying on spring or well water is as follows:—

Borough Proper ...	...	1	
Out-Parish ...	...	192	Approximate population 750
Total ...	...	193	

REMARKS

During the year 3,300 yards of water main were laid to serve Ivington and Newtown. The following Out-Parish areas are not provided with piped supplies: Brierley, Elms Green, Stagbatch, Hyde Ash, Aulden and Wintercott, Stretford and Hennor, Wharton and Marlbrook. In general the water supplies for houses in Out-Parish areas are private shallow wells, usually unlined and of a type subject to contamination. Of the twenty-seven samples of well and spring water taken, ten were reported upon as satisfactory. Piped supplies exist in the whole of the Borough Proper. Plans are in course of preparation for a further extension of the Town Water supply to serve the Hyde Ash area.

SAMPLES TAKEN AND SUBMITTED FOR ANALYSIS

(a) Piped supplies (House taps, Waterworks well and Midsummer Meadow Well ...	...	...	...	...	...	60
(b) Wells and Springs ...	...	...	...	...	...	27
(c) Swimming Bath (Bacteriological) ...	...	...	...	...	...	2

DRAINAGE AND SEWERAGE

HOUSE DRAINS AND OTHER BUILDINGS

Smoke, colour and water tests ...	...	...	...	6
New drains laid (old premises) ...	...	...	...	2
Cleansed, trapped or ventilated ...	...	...	...	39
Inspection chambers built (old premises) ...	...	...	...	2
Septic Tanks built or cleansed ...	...	...	...	6

Borough Proper — Drainage of old premises is in the main poor, consisting usually of unjointed pipes, devoid of inspection chambers or ventilation shafts.

No Borough Sewage works exists and sewage disposal is to an open ditch.

Out-Parish — New houses drained to Septic Tanks. Old houses generally feed to ditches.

Number of Houses drained to sewer:

Borough Proper	...	...	1,357
Out-Parish	...	...	46

Number of Houses not drained to sewer:

Borough Proper	...	...	30
Out-Parish	...	...	290

CLOSETS

Additional provided (old houses and other buildings) ...	...	...	8
Conversion or renewals ...	...	...	2

Borough Proper — Common usage of closets, usually by the occupants of two houses, prevail in some cases. A type of closet existing is the long hopper with a wooden surround. As new houses come into being, and areas are cleared, common usages will cease.

Out-Parish — Pails and privy closets predominate.

RIVERS AND STREAMS

No working class houses were flooded or rendered uninhabitable during the year under review.

REFUSE DISPOSAL

Controlled Tipping was continued at the public tip with satisfactory results. Collections in the Borough Proper take place once or twice weekly according to locality. In the Out-Parish there is no public collection, though certain houses in close proximity to the Borough Proper have refuse removed by the Council for a yearly charge.

RODENT CONTROL

The sewers received treatment at certain manholes. Little evidence of rat infestation was found in the sewers. The Public Abattoir and refuse tip receive periodic treatment.

Premises rat proofed ...	...	...	1
Number of Inspections ...	...	...	37

COMMON LODGING HOUSES. None in the Borough or Out-Parish.

FACTORIES AND WORKSHOP. Number on register ...	68
Inspections ...	33
Defects found ...	3
Remedied ...	2

TENTS AND CARAVANS. Camping does not exist on a large scale. No sites registered.

Caravans removed ...	...	...	1
Number of caravans ...	...	...	6
Visits ...	...	...	7

BEDBUGS. Although many old houses are infested only one case was reported during the year.

Houses disinfested: 1.

DISINFECTION on account of INFECTIOUS DISEASES

Premises fumigated 9

Mode of disinfection — Formalin lamps and liquid spraying.

SANITARY INSPECTION

TABLE SHOWING INSPECTIONS CARRIED OUT DURING THE YEAR
TOGETHER WITH THE ACTION TAKEN AND THE RESULTS

Inspections under	Number	Informal Notices served	Statutory Notices served	Notices Complied with
Housing (1936) Act	137	—	2	—
Housing (Public Health Acts)	322	125	18	115
Factories	33	3	—	2
Cowsheds and Dairies	89	3	—	3
Milk Samples	57	4	—	4
Food Premises and Kitchens	65	7	—	2
Abattoir	936	—	—	—
Drains (Smoke, Colour and Water Tests)	6	—	—	—
Water Samples	89	21	—	5
Infectious Diseases	17	—	—	—
Rodent Control	37	1	—	1
Ice Cream Premises	22	—	—	—
Ice Cream Samples	35	2	—	2
Miscellaneous Visits	44	8	—	5
Schools—School Camps	2	—	—	—
Tents and Caravans	7	2	—	1
Vermineous Premises	1	—	—	—
	1,899	176	20	140
Defects Remedied ... ..	...	...	178	
Dustbins Renewed ... ..	...	...	50	

SECTION D.—HOUSING.

LIST OF APPLICANTS FOR ACCOMMODATION—

The following is a summary of live applications at the end of December, 1949.

	Classification of Applicants	Total No. of Separate families
Without separate homes		251
With separate homes		217
		<u>468</u>

The number of new houses completed and occupied during the year is as follows:—

COUNCIL HOUSES

(a) Permanent	—	Brick	...	...	...	4
(b) Permanent	—	(Airey Type)—Prefabricated				
		Borough	...	...	...	8
		Out-Parish	...	...	...	8

PRIVATELY BUILT

(c) Permanent	—	Borough	...	...	Nil
		Out-Parish	...	...	3
					<u>23</u>
					—

The relatively small number of Council houses built, and tenanted, during the year has not diminished to any appreciable extent the number of unfit houses occupied. Fifteen derelict houses have been demolished, 12 of which were situate in Clearance Areas confirmed.

In my Annual Report of 1938 I indicated that Clearance Orders were confirmed during the year affecting 98 houses. Eighty of these houses are still in being and likely to remain, along with many other roofed in walls, as primitive habitations for a great number of years, based on the following:—

- (1) Small number of Council houses built per year.
- (2) High rental basis of new houses compared with old.
- (2) Essential tenancy selection and factors such as (a) families without homes; (b) overcrowding; (c) dangerous conditions.

The present rate of completion of houses is not keeping pace with the current demand. Until more houses can be completed per year, capable of being let at reasonable rentals, it will be impossible to re-house many families at present living in houses situate in confirmed Clearance Areas.

The present position is approximately as follows:—

	CATEGORIES					Total
	1	2	3	4	5	
Number of occupied privately owned premises (residential, working class, flats or rooms over shops) ...	655	225	59	11	462	1412
Number of Council houses occupied	306	—	—	—	5	311
Number of derelict void houses not demolished ...	—	—	—	—	12	12
Totals ...	961	225	59	11	479	1735

- Category 1 — Satisfactory.
 „ 2 — Minor defects.
 „ 3 — Requiring repair, structural alteration or improvement.
 „ 4 — Appropriate for re-ocnditioning under Housing (Rural Workers) Acts.
 „ 5 — Requiring demolition and replacement.

STATISTICS RELATING TO COUNCIL HOUSES

	Built Pre 1939	Built Post War 1947-8-9	Old Houses Acquired	Total
Ivington ...	—	8**	—	8
Caswell Terrace ...	8	—	—	8
Caswell Crescent ...	28	—	—	28
Caswell Road ...	54	—	—	54
Worcester Road ...	6	—	—	6
Cranes Lane ...	6	—	—	6
Rainbow Street ...	6	—	—	6
Croft Street ...	43	4	—	47
Churchill Avenue ...	—	42	—	42
George Street ...	—	2	—	2
Holland Road ...	6	20*	—	26
Mortimer Street ...	39	—	—	39
Mortimer Place ...	2	—	—	2
Wigmore Street ...	10	16**	—	26
Waterworks Houses ...	2	—	—	2
Bargates ...	—	—	3	3
West Croft ...	—	4	1	5
Dishley Street ...	—	—	1	1
	210	96	5	311

*Temporary prefabricated bungalows.

**Permanent prefabricated houses (Airey Type).

VOID HOUSES DEMOLISHED DURING YEAR 15
 UNDERTAKINGS ACCEPTED UNDER SECTION 11, HOUSING ACT, 1936 1
 INSPECTION OF DWELLING HOUSES DURING THE YEAR:

- (1) (a) Total number of dwelling houses inspected for housing defects under Public Health and Housing Acts ... 212
 (b) Number of inspections made for the purpose ... 459
 (2) Number of dwelling houses found not to be, in all respects, reasonably fit for human habitation 27

ACTION UNDER STATUTORY NOTICES DURING THE YEAR:

Proceedings under Public Health Act:

- (1) Number of dwelling houses in respect of which notices were served requiring defects to be remedied 18
 (2) Number of dwelling houses in which defects were remedied after service of formal notices—

- (a) By Owners 7
 (b) By Local Authority in default of owner ... Nil

Van Dwellings Nil

HOUSES BUILT AND OCCUPIED DURING THE YEAR:

- (1) By Local Authority 20
 (2) Privately 3

SECTION E.—INSPECTION AND SUPERVISION OF FOOD

1. MILK SUPPLY.

Routine inspections of farms and dairies:

- (a) Examination for bacterial content — Samples sent to County Laboratory.
 (b) Examination for Tubercle Bacilli — None by Local Authority.

2. NUMBER OF SAMPLES TAKEN:

- Tuberculin Tested Milk 42
 Pasteurised Milk 12
 Ordinary Milk 3

ANALYSIS OF SAMPLES — TUBERCULIN TESTED MILK

<i>Methylene Blue Test</i>	<i>No. of Samples</i>	<i>Pre-Licence Samples</i>
Not decolourised in $4\frac{1}{2}/5\frac{1}{2}$ hours ...	37	—
Decolourised in $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours ...	1	—
„ in $2\frac{1}{2}$ „ ...	1	1
„ in 3 „ ...	—	1
„ in $3\frac{1}{2}$ „ ...	2	1
„ in $4\frac{1}{2}$ „ ...	1	—
Number of samples taken ...	42	3

ANALYSIS OF SAMPLES — PASTEURISED MILK

Number of Samples	Phosphatase Test. Number giving reading of more than 2.3 Blue Units	Methylene Blue Test. Discolouration within 30 mins.	Number of Satisfactory Samples
12	Nil	Nil	12

- DAIRIES BUILT ... 2
 COWHOUSES RECONDITIONED ... 2

3. FOOD PREMISES.

Routine inspections from time to time. General standard of cleanliness is good.

ICE CREAM

The following tables show the number of samples of Ice Cream taken, analyses and grades.

<i>Methylene Blue Test</i>	<i>Number of Samples</i>	<i>Provisional Grades</i>	<i>Number of Samples</i>
Not decolourised in 4½ hours	10	1	10
Decolourised immediately ...	3		
„ in 1 hour ...	1	2	6
„ in 1½ „ ...	1		
„ in 2 „ ...	1	3	3
„ in 2½ „ ...	—		
„ in 3 „ ...	—		
„ in 3½ „ ...	3	4	3
„ in 4 „ ...	3		
„ in 4½ „ ...	—		
Total samples taken ...	22	Total samples taken ...	22

NOTE.—In cases where samples fell within Grades 3 and 4, the vendors were communicated with.

MEAT

Meat Inspection (Public Abattoir).—Centralised slaughtering under the Ministry of Food scheme of control is in operation. Areas served are Leominster Borough, Leominster and Wigmore Rural District, Kington Urban and Rural Districts, and Weobley Rural District. Inspection is carried out by your Sanitary Inspector, who is a qualified Meat Inspector. This responsibility entails for him additional evening and week-end work.

The undernoted were slaughtered and inspected during the year:—

Cattle excluding Cows	Cows	Pigs	Lambs Sheep	Calves	Total
685	361	191	4,359	586	6,182

The figures are inclusive of the following dressed carcasses received:

31 Sheep
2 Calves

Diseased Meat Discovered and dealt with:—

ALL DISEASES EXCEPT TUBERCULOSIS

	Beasts	Pigs	Sheep	Calves
Whole carcasses condemned ...	42	8	69	16
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned ...	570	32	571	9
Percentage of number affected with diseases other than Tuberculosis	58.5%	20.9%	14.7%	4.3%

TUBERCULOSIS ONLY

	Beasts	Pigs	Sheep	Calves
Whole carcasses condemned ...	24	3	—	1
Carcasses of which some part or organ was condemned ...	22	7	—	—
Percentage of number affected with Tuberculosis ...	4.4%	5.2%	—	.2%
Weight of diseased meat discovered and dealt with ...	38,413lbs.	2,364lbs.	4,829lbs.	1,393lbs.
TOTAL: 20 tons 19 cwt. 2 qrs. 15 lbs.				

The percentage figures show the proportion of food animals found diseased.

METHOD OF INSPECTION.—In accordance with Ministry of Health Memorandum 62 (Foods), with certain relaxations.

The Public Health (Meat) Regulations, 1924, are well observed by all meat traders. No Meat Marketing Scheme under Part III of the Regulations is in operation. Byelaws are in force respecting slaughter-houses.

OTHER FOODS

The under-noted foods were surrendered during the year:—

35 tins Fruit; 25 tins Vegetables; 103 tins Fish; 14 stone Fish; 5 tins Soup; 64 lbs. Sausages; 88 tins Milk; 15 tins and 1 jar Jam/Syrup; 3½ lbs. Biscuits; 2 tins Spaghetti; 6 lbs. Sausage Meat; 3 lbs. Bacon; 355 lbs. Imported Beef; 857 lbs. English Beef (salvaged); 86 Puddings; 95 lbs. Sugar (salvaged); 22 9-oz. packets Dates; 30 tins Meat; 81 loaves (released for pig food); 8 packets Doughnuts; 3 packets Cereals; 2 lbs. Cereals; 34 lbs. Lunch/Roll Meat; 2 tins Tomato Juice; 80 lbs. Soya Flour; 30½ lbs. Cheese (salvaged); 6 lbs. Polony; 1 tin Paste; 1 packet Cake Mixture.

SECTION F.—PREVALENCE OF INFECTIOUS DISEASE

MEASLES. During the year one hundred and nineteen cases of measles were notified. The majority of these cases occurred in the second quarter of the year and affected the age group 3—10 years. Both seasonal and age incidence were therefore favourable and no case fatalities were reported.

SCARLET FEVER. Fourteen cases of scarlet Fever were notified, but these occurred as 'dropping' cases throughout the year and not in epidemic form, so that no source or single case was established as a causative factor.

ANALYSIS OF TOTAL NOTIFIED CASES, ACCORDING TO AGE

DISEASE	AGE OF PATIENT											
	0-1	1-2	2-3	3-4	4-5	5-6	6-7	7-10	10-15	15-20	20-30	30-40
Measles ...	7	10	15	17	26	22	6	11	1	2	—	—
Whooping Cough ...	1	1	1	—	2	1	1	2	—	1	—	3
Scarlet Fever ...	—	—	2	2	2	3	—	3	2	—	1	—
Erysipelas ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	2	1	—	—
Pneumonia ...	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	3
												Unknown
												Total

DIPHTHERIA IMMUNISATION

The following figures are presented through information supplied by the County Medical Officer.

Number of children at 31st December, 1949 who had completed a course of immunisation at any time before that date (i.e. at any time since 1st January, 1935):

								Total under 15	Estimated mid-year child population 1949		
Age at 31.12.49	Under 1	1	2	3	4	5-9	10-14	Under 5	5-14	Total	
i.e. Born in year	1949	48	47	46	45	40-44	35-39				
	4	57	86	73	70	307	228	825	550	892	
										1442	

These figures indicate that 52.7 % of the child population under 5 years of age has been immunised against diphtheria as compared with 37.9% at the end of 1948. 59.9% of the child population of 5-14 years has been immunised against diphtheria as compared with 49.1% at the end of the previous year; while 57.2% of the children under 15 years of age has been protected against diphtheria by immunisation.

TUBERCULOSIS

At the end of 1949, the Tuberculosis Register contained the names of twenty-nine males and eighteen females, who normally reside within the Borough.

During the year, twelve new cases were notified, nine on account of Pulmonary Tuberculosis, and three because of the presence of the disease in parts of the body other than the lungs.

During the same period, five deaths of persons suffering from Tuberculosis occurred and two recovered from the disease.

CAUSES OF DEATH (all ages)

DISEASE				Males	Females	Total
Tuberculosis	...	...	...	4	1	5
Cancer (all forms)	...	...	...	8	3	11
Diabetes	...	...	...	0	1	1
Intra-cranial vascular lesions	...	...	...	5	7	12
Diseases of the Heart and Arteries	...	...	...	15	15	30
Bronchitis and Pneumonia	...	...	...	3	2	5
Diseases of the Digestive system	...	...	...	0	2	2
Nephritis	...	...	...	1	1	2
Prematurity and congenital conditions at birth	...	...	...	5	0	5
Violence	...	...	...	1	3	4
All other causes	...	...	...	2	2	4